



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Denali National Park and Preserve News Release

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Environmental Assessment on Plowing of Denali Park Road Available for Public Comment

DENALI PARK, Alaska - An Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluating draft alternatives for plowing the Denali Park Road beyond park headquarters during the winter is now available for public comment. The National Park Service (NPS) is considering plowing the road as far as the Mountain Vista Rest Area (Mile 12) in order to provide vehicle access to an additional nine miles of the road. Goals of each of the three action alternatives evaluated in the EA include increasing the range of recreational opportunities available to winter visitors and providing winter visitors opportunities to potentially view Mt. McKinley from within the park.

Commercial vehicles would be allowed to travel this portion of the road during periods when park concession transportation is not available.

The NPS has developed a range of three action alternatives and one no action alternative for consideration:

- **Alternative 1 – No Action – No plowing beyond Park Headquarters (Mile 3)**
During the winter months snow on one lane of the Park Road would be packed from Mile 3 to Mile 7 to mitigate the buildup of overflow ice on the road. This section of the road would continue to be a designated backcountry hiker area during winter months.
- **Alternative 2 – Plow road for full winter season**
The NPS would keep the Denali Park Road open to the Mountain Vista Rest Area year round. The Spring Trail would be improved to provide safer access, which would include rerouting up to 1000 feet of the trail. Some minor improvements to the rest area would also be necessary. The section of road between Mile 3 to Mile 12 would no longer be part of the winter backcountry hiker area as designated in the Backcountry Management Plan. Implementation of this alternative may include a phased approach with a trial period as outlined in Alternative 4, followed by opening the road in mid-January as outlined in Alternative 3 prior to opening the road for the entire winter in the future.
- **Alternative 3 – Plow road for partial winter season beginning mid-January**
The NPS would open the Park Road for vehicle use in mid-January to the Mountain Vista Rest Area. Components of this alternative include minor work on the Spring Trail and minimal improvements to the rest area. The road from Mile 3 to Mile 12 would not be a winter backcountry hiker area during these months. Implementation of this alternative may include a phased approach with a trial period as outlined in Alternative 4.

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- **Alternative 4 – Plow road on a trial basis for 3-5 years beginning mid-February (NPS preferred)**

The NPS would open the Park Road to the Mountain Vista Rest Area for vehicle use in mid-February for a three – five year trial period. No improvements to the Spring Trail or rest area are included in this alternative.

The NPS has published a draft EA entitled “Winter Road Plowing”. It is available at the NPS planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. The draft EA analyzes the impacts of the proposed alternatives and the no action alternative. It was completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9).

Comments on the EA may be submitted through Saturday, March 16, 2013, preferably via the website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Comments may also be faxed to (907) 683-9612, or mailed to the address below:

Superintendent
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For questions about the EA, please contact Paula Homan, Project Planning Lead, at 907- 683-6223 or paula_homan@nps.gov.

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